The Builder.

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ALL England has been railway mad,—perhaps it is so still; and the present session will be remembered by many members of the lower House as the session of "hard lines." From the office-messenger at eighteen shillings a week (we speak what we know), to hereditary legislators, men of all grades have been dabbling in shares, and we might say, women too; for one distinguished peeress, until this time better known at Almacks' than in the share-market, made 30,000 good pounds by *guessing* cleverly, what lines would be favourably reported on by the Board of Trade. To put down the *roulette* tables at Epsom may be very desirable, but there are larger gambling-booths at home, where Home Secretaries intrude not.

Men without money, but with a friend in the "direction," have obtained large allotments, speculating on a rise, and generally with success; indeed, up to this time, it seems tolerably certain that all have benefitted. Let us hope that before "calls" are made, the shares generally may have passed into the hands of men who really have capital to invest, and that thus the difficulty and distress which must otherwise be anticipated may be avoided.

The excitement in which thousands have been kept for several months past, first by the reports of the Board of Trade, then by the discussion of the general questions (the advantage or otherwise of the atmospheric system, and the relative merits of the broad and narrow gauge), and ultimately when reported on favourably by the special investigation of their own particular scheme before committees of both Houses of Parliament,—can hardly be described. The money spent in this latter stage must have been enormous (by some of the lines, it is said, as much as 1,000*l.* a day); and all but those personally advantaged by the expenditure must agree in wishing that some less wasteful mode of proceeding could be adopted.

In the course of a recent forced confinement in some of the committee-rooms, we have been led to cry shame on the undue advantage taken by landowners who possess influence, and have used that influence in opposition to projects of admitted utility, simply to extort an exorbitant sum of money as the price of their ultimate neutrality. In one case that we could name, 1,800*l.* per acre is to be paid by special agreement for land that the owner had contracted to sell only a short time ago for another purpose for 300*l.* per acre. If an owner is dispossessed of property against his will, he should unquestionably be paid handsomely for it, but surely the legislature should not allow him to use any accidental influence he may have, as, for example, being a member of their own body, to extort any unreasonable sum, which the company may be led to assent to rather than incur the enormous expense entailed by opposition.

The question of *metropolitan* railways is forcing itself on public attention, and several bold schemes have been propounded for connecting the principal lines in London. Amongst these the Thames Embankment and City Railway Company, of which the following is an outline, has been received with more than usual favour by the press:—

"It is proposed to embank the river from Hungerford Market to Blackfriars Bridge, forming, in the space recovered from the shallow parts of the stream, public gardens, terraces, and docks, and along the edge of the embankment a double line of road; the outer portion as an atmospheric railway, the inner as a macadamized road for ordinary vehicles, with a pavement for foot passengers, communicating with the streets and wharfs, and also, by short viaducts above and below the railway, with landing-places from the river. At Blackfriars Bridge, or about the site of Paul's Wharf, the proposed double road will leave the embankment, and be continued along a new street sixty-six feet wide, leading to the Blackwall Railway and Whitechapel, and, by a short branch at Southwark Bridge, direct to the Mansion House. The railroad portion of the line will join the Blackwall at Fenchurch-street, or the Minories, and be carried along the middle of the new street, upon *an open frame-work of iron girders, at the level of the first floor windows*, leaving an under road of corresponding width for the usual street traffic, and opening throughout the whole line valuable frontages for building."

It thus presents two important and novel features,—the embankment of the Thames, as a money speculation (an achievement which seems too great for our Government), and the commencement of a system of railways through the public streets, out of the way of all ordinary traffic. Relative to these viaducts the *Iron Times* remarks:—"After careful consideration, we can find no objection to urge against them, save that they are *new*. This is a fault we are satisfied will rapidly amend with the perception of their high importance—of the millions per annum that will accrue in savings by reason of their adoption. Have any of our readers watched the erection of the new Houses of Parliament? There may be beheld a railway viaduct set up for the purpose of constructing a building, to be removed when the building is finished. Surely it must be worth while to construct such viaducts for permanent purposes as well as for temporary ones! As an economical plan, these railway viaducts may probably be constructed for about 40,000*l.* per mile. Of elegant construction they may amount to 80,000*l.*, averaging 60,000*l.* Nor is it a mere speculation; the traffic exists—expensive horse traffic—where a saving of horses and a saving of time are both to be achieved."

The line will be in connection with the South-Western at Hungerford Bridge, and with the Great Western, and the London and Birmingham, either at the same point, or near Blackfriars Bridge, by a short extension of the City and Camden Town Junction, from their proposed terminus in Farringdon-street to the river.

Another project, instead of taking the railways over the ordinary course of traffic, takes them *under* it, and contemplates a series of tunnels, which would render London a huge warren and a perfect bore:—

They propose to establish their central terminus at or in the immediate neighbourhood of Hungerford Market, and upon a scale commensurate with the demands of an entire system of metropolitan railways. To proceed thus by tunnels of communication to the London and Birmingham Railway, to the Great Western Railway, the Eastern Counties, and, by subsidiary termini and approaches at the intersections of all the principal roads, to complete the connection between all the northern lines and every part of the northern suburbs. To continue these lines across the river to a station on the south bank, and thence to the Dover, Brighton, and South-Western railways, "thus completing the access to and from every part of the kingdom and the continent." The suburbs are to have a company of their own, and are to be reached on the atmospheric principle. It would thus seem, that having driven the stage coaches off the roads, the rail will now compete with the omnibus, and take us from one end of town to the other, either through the air or through the earth, at "six-pence all all the way."

When railways were first projected, the towns near which they came strove to keep them as far off as possible, and spent immense sums in effecting what has been most injurious to them. They have now found out their mistake, and would gladly pay as many thousands to bring a station near them as they before spent hundreds to drive it off. Every town now strives for its line, justly feeling that without it, its importance must sink; and before long every village will have one too, or must cease to be a village. How strangely and how rapidly opinions alter! Before we find fault with others, still more, before we *burn* them for not thinking as we do, it would be well always to remember, that ere long we may actually think as *they* do.

## THE QUEEN'S PAVILION IN BUCKINGHAM PALACE GARDENS.

HER Majesty's summer-house, concerning which so much has been said from time to time, is now completed, and will hereafter be regarded with interest, if not at this moment, as an early example in England of the use of fresco painting in decoration.

Within the last few years, owing to a number of concurrent circumstances, public attention has been directed to the combination of decorative painting with architecture, after the examples left to us by the great Italian painters and architects of the sixteenth century. The introduction, or rather the revival, of fresco painting in this country has become, in connection with a great national monument, a topic of general interest, an affair of national importance, and no longer merely a matter of private or artistic speculation. While curiosity and interest were thus strongly excited towards the subject, and our artists were occupied in considering its feasibility and the particular management of a vehicle almost unknown to them, it occurred to Her Majesty and His Royal Highness Prince Albert, that it would be well to have the experiment made on a small scale, yet under circumstances which might lend it a more than common interest, and at the same time offer to some of our first artists at once a high motive and a fair opportunity to try their powers in this new *old* method. The idea was surely a happy one; and not the less seasonable that every one who had considered the subject (at least every one who understood it), felt that it was a method which presented particular difficulties to some of the ablest and most distinguished of our painters, whose habitual style of execution, whose aim in point of treatment of their subject and effect, had been precisely the reverse of what is required in fresco.

The application of fresco painting to the decoration of architecture demands the adaptation of parts to a whole; a preconcerted mode of treatment, in which the painting shall seem to be in unison with the original design of the edifice; the harmonious combination of many minds, working under the direction of one mind, to one purpose: and, with regard to the mechanical part of the process, it requires much thought and study in the preparation of the materials, and great care and precision, as well as great rapidity, in the execution.

The advantage of mingling in the interior decoration of a building isolated figures and historical subjects with arabesque ornaments,

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